

A LETTER,
TO THE
Right Hon^{ble}. the Earl of Warwick;
ON HIS OPPOSITION
TO THE RESOLUTIONS,
PROPOSED AND CARRIED, AT A GENERAL MEETING
OF THE INHABITANTS
OF WARWICK,
On the Subject of the New Assessed Tax Bill.

By An INHABITANT OF WARWICK.

What though no gaudy Titles grace my Birth!
Titles, the servile Courtier's lean Reward!
Sometimes the Pay of Virtue, but more oft
The Hire which Greatness gives to Slaves and Sycophants!
Yet, Heav'n, that made me honest, made me more
Than e'er a King did, when he made a Lord!

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M.DCC.XCVIII.

WILKINSON

TO THE

RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF WARWICK

ON HIS OPPOSITION

TO THE RESOLUTIONS

PROPOSED AND CARRIED AT A GENERAL MEETING

OF THE INSTANTANTS

OF WARWICK.

By J. J. T. B. B. B.



By the Warwickshire Institution of Warwick.

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PREFACE.

ALL that is necessary to introduce the succeeding Pages, to whatever attention they may be thought to deserve from the Public, is, a copy of the two following papers, with only a few lines of plain narrative subjoined :

COPY OF THE REQUISITION.

To the Worshipful the Mayor of Warwick.

SIR,—WE request you to call a Meeting of the Inhabitants of this Borough, to take into Consideration the Propriety of instructing their Representatives on the Subject of the Bill now pending in Parliament for increasing the Assessed Taxes ; a Measure which appears to us to be glaringly unequal in its Operation, grossly oppressive to the middle Orders of Society and ruinous to the dearest Interests of the Country.

Signed by Fourteen Names.

IN compliance with the above Requisition, I do hereby appoint a Meeting of the Inhabitants of this Borough, to be holden at the Court-House on Thursday the 21st Day of *December* Instant, at Eleven o'Clock in the Forenoon.

C. G. WADE, Mayor.

WARWICK, Dec. 18, 1797.

COPY OF THE RESOLUTIONS.

AT a Numerous MEETING of the Inhabitants of the Borough of *Warwick*, held at the Court-House, the 21st of *December*, 1797,—to take into Consideration, the Bill pending in Parliament, for Increasing the Assessed Taxes;

C. G. WADE, Esq; Mayor, in the Chair:—

Resolved,

I. That it is the sense of this Meeting, that the present Assessment of the Taxes, denominated Assessed Taxes, is most glaringly unequal; extremely burdensome to the middle and inferior Classes; and affecting very slightly, in proportion to their ability, the higher Orders of the People.

II. That to exact a Contribution, as is proposed, founded, in any Proportion on such Assessments, is a Measure which must be ruinous to Multitudes, unequal in its operation upon those of the middle Classes, and scandalously favourable to the most opulent Members of the Community.

III. That Property ought to be the basis of any Contribution; and that therefore no Modification of the proposed Measure can render it otherwise than radically and systematically unjust.

IV. That

C. G. WADE, Mayor.

WARWICK, Dec. 21, 1797.

IV. That the modifications, recently introduced, leave unaltered two of the worst and most objectionable Provisions of the original Bill, *viz.* That of making *past* expenditure the rule of *future* contribution ; and also that of granting the Relief, proposed in certain Cases, only on the intolerable Condition of the disclosure of private Affairs.

V. That the Hon. G. Villiers and Mr. Gaussen, Members for the Borough, be instructed and required to oppose the further progress of the Bill.

C. G. WADE, Mayor, Chairman.

Resolved,

VI. That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Mayor, for his impartial Conduct.

At the above mentioned Meeting the Earl of Warwick attended—first protested, in a lofty tone of authority, against the propriety or legality of holding such Meetings—but afterwards condescended to debate the questions proposed—divided with a small minority against them—then retired—secretly framed a PROTEST—which some were persuaded and others compelled to sign—and he has finally printed and published that Protest, as expressing the sense of the People of Warwick, in opposition to the Resolutions proposed

proposed and passed at a Public Meeting legally convened. Whether his Lordship has not, by such unfair and unwarrantable proceedings, justly exposed himself to all the severity of Censure, expressed in the following Letter, let the Public determine.

WARWICK, Jan. 8, 1798.

LETTER,

LETTER, &c.

MY LORD,

AT length the miserable *conspiracy*, hatched within the walls of your Lordship's castle, aimed to invalidate the fair decision of a Public Meeting, legally convened, is brought to its consummation. The wretched jumble of absurdities, incoherences, and falsehoods, called a PROTEST, exposed, for so many days, at the Court-House, to the wonder and contempt of *many* who *signed* it, is now, I find, held forth, from the press, to the wonder and contempt of the world. It is in vain to hope, that even the long list of *names* attached, most of them of your Lordship's *dependents*, and many of them *procured* by the *vilest arts*, can shelter from deserved shame and just indignation, a plot, *base* in its conception, *low* in its contrivance, and in its manner of execution, an *outrage* upon all that is fair, and decent, and honourable between man and man.

Whoever, my Lord places himself forward before the public view; whoever prefers a claim to the public confidence, and challenges a right to guide and influence the public opinion, ought to remember that a thousand watchful eyes are ever upon him; that a natural and even laudable *suspicion* is often directed towards him, ready to take alarms at the slightest deviations from the plain and straight path of rectitude. Having stood forth, in strenuous and stubborn opposition, to the general sense of the People of Warwick, on a subject involving deeply their dearest interest; and having sustained that opposition, by measures, not surely fair, nor honourable, nor even just, you cannot be surprized to find that your conduct has not escaped *jealous* and *indignant* observation.

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My Lord, it might well deserve an inquiry *whether* your public conduct has, in its general course, been such as to reflect lustre upon those high hereditary honours, of which your Lordship vaunted so proudly, before the assembled inhabitants of Warwick : and *whether* it justly intitles you to all that deference and confidence, which, in a loud tone of assurance, you demanded from them. Alas! my Lord, I fear, that much might be said, too notorious to be denied, on the articles of—freedom of elections—sale of boroughs—notices to quit—promises to obtain votes—and threats to punish the contumacious—which could not be thought very consistent with the *dignity* or the *duty* of a British Peer—nor with *those principles* of the British constitution, of which, *they* who are the loudest *boasters*, are sometimes known to be the most shameless and wicked *violators*.

Your Lordship's wonderful penetration, and never ceasing suspicion of plots, have, I find, discovered a *deep laid design* "to attack the English constitution;" * *concealed*, under a fair, open and legal opposition to the most unjust, unconstitutional and oppressive Bill of Taxes, that ever was heard of in this country. But, my Lord, with all your *trembling apprehensions* for the safety of the Constitution; I do not perceive that you *feel* the slightest alarm at those more *open* and *outrageous* attacks, long directed against some of its most sacred and essential parts—in the *bold* and *undisguised interference*, at elections, of those whose interference is strictly *prohibited* by law—in that *overbearing, illegal influence* of the Peerage which has absolutely annihilated, in many places, the constitutional rights of the people—and in that vile traffic of boroughs, which employs the cruel aids of *tyranny*, for the mean purposes of *gain*; which first *usurps* the rights of others, and then *barter*s them away, to the best bidder, in order to procure supplies for extravagance. My Lord, I consider your *extreme anxiety* for the safety of the British constitution, to the full as *sincere*, and as much entitled to credit, as *that* of the base traitor, who talks for ever of secret and dangerous foes, while he is himself engaged, openly and daringly, in designs, which aim at the *subversion* of all that is important and valuable in a State.

But, my Lord, the general and avowed principles of your Lordship's political conduct, however much they might be thought

* See the printed Protest.

thought to require it, are not the objects of my present animadversion. I mean only to notice, and expose, to just reprehension, the novel and unprecedented, and, I must say, the *unfair* and *unjust* proceedings—the sequel of the most extraordinary, indecorous and vehement opposition, surely ever attempted, by a single individual, supported only by a few persons devoted to his interests, against the *general sense*, fairly expressed, of a numerous and respectable assembly.

My Lord, you cannot surely be ignorant that there is always a certain *decent respect*, universally understood to be due, to every *public assembly* convened by legal summons, for legal purposes. But I am sorry to observe that all the plain and acknowledged rules of common *civility* and *decorum* were utterly forgotten, or held in scorn; when, with a lofty, menacing air, with a brow of defiance, and a tone of contemptuous anger, your Lordship came forward to address the Inhabitants of Warwick. One might have easily fancied that the old feudal times were returned once more; and that some haughty Baron, descending from his castle, was come to announce his will before his assembled vassals. Other speakers usually talk of the *honour* of addressing their audience. But you, my Lord, reversed this language, and spoke, in no gentle hints, but in gross terms, of your own “condescension,” in appearing in that assembly: and you seemed to think the honour of being *reproached* and *threatened* by the lips of a Lord, for daring to complain of oppressive taxes, almost *too much* for the miserable people of Warwick. My Lord, I did not know that it was *one* of the privileges of the British Peerage, to deal out low abuse and rude insult to those “whose birth no gaudy titles grace”—for whose *advantage*, indeed, it ought, some how or other, to appear that all hereditary distinctions are held: otherwise, as it is clear that such distinctions ought never to have been granted, so it is equally certain that they can never long support themselves against the awakened reason of mankind. Yes! my Lord, I may hazard the prediction, that all your Lordship’s hopes, so fondly indulged, and expressed so feelingly*, of retaining your lordly dignities, and transmitting

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them

* His Lordship proudly informed the Meeting, “That his Father “was a Lord, that himself was a Lord,” and fervently expressed his hopes, “that his Son would be a Lord after him.”

them unimpaired to your latest posterity, will hardly avail; *unless* it can be shewn that such hereditary honours are for the *common good*, and not merely for the aggrandizement of private individuals and families. But whether, my Lord, *arrogance* and *insolence* is the best demonstration that can be given of the utility of privileged orders, I am content to refer to your Lordship's judgment.

But having yielded to this mighty stoop of condescension, and deigned to mingle with unhonoured, untitled men, though without laying aside for a moment the proud dignity of a Peer; what, my Lord, was the *language* that you held? Much of it was, I confess, to me, unintelligible—sounds to which I endeavoured in vain to fix some precise meaning. But *so far* as I understood it, it was language, the most rude, indecorous, and contemptuous, that ever came forth from the swollen lips of a high bred Peer, or that ever insulted the ears of the lowest-born and meanest of the People. You came there, you tauntingly declared, not to assist the meeting by your counsels; but to *protest* against *all* such meetings. In the true spirit of that infamous declaration “the people have nothing to do with the laws but to obey them;” you represented the inhabitants of Warwick as “*incapable*” of understanding their own interests; and you even dared to reproach, “as factious and evil minded men,” * all who presumed to complain of oppressive taxes; and to seek, in a legal way, redress of grievances.

My Lord, I am to this hour at a loss to guess by *what right* even the highest Peer of the Realm could lawfully enter his protest against a meeting of the people; convened with the strictest attention to all the forms, prescribed by law. † But what shall I say to the *gross indignity* which the chief Magistrate of Warwick has offered to *himself*? All that has lately passed is surely no vision of the night. It is not surely a dream—that the worshipful the Mayor *issued* the summons which called the meeting together; that he *presided* in the chair, with so much propriety and impartiality; that he *declared* the sense of the meeting to be in *favour* of the resolutions proposed; and that finally, as chairman, he *signed* them with his own hands and *transmitted* them in his own name to the Members. But if all this is *fact*, how shall I tell, without danger of offering a gross affront, the *sequel* of

* See also the Protest.

† See the requisition—Preface.

of the Story? Moved, my Lord, I am to suppose, either by your public protestations, or else by your private persuasions; without the smallest *hint* of apology, or the least *apparent* sense of shame, he has *actually affixed* his name to a printed paper, which most expressly condemns *himself* for the very act of calling the meeting*; and which roundly asserts, in contradiction, to his own previous and public declaration, that the resolutions *did not* express the general sense of that Meeting†! Of strange self-contradiction, and miserable inconsistency, surely never before was there so astonishing an example—except, my Lord, it be in that part of your Lordship's own conduct, of which I am next to speak.

Having, my Lord, for whatever reasons, entered your protest against the propriety or legality of the Meeting; surely, to have been consistent with yourself, you ought then to have *retired*. By proceeding, as you did, to *debate* the question proposed, and especially by *dividing* with the minority against it; you *acknowledged* in effect, the competency of the Meeting—the very point which you had just before solemnly *denied*. But even the plainest dictates of reason and propriety, amidst the tremendous storms and agitations of passion, your Lordship could not be expected to consider. Offended Pride and resisted Insolence grew mad: disdainful anger rising into rage, burst all restraints; and broke forth in *furious denials* of the right assumed, and in *gross insulting mockery* of the *complaints* alledged, by the assembled Inhabitants of Warwick.

My Lord, I acknowledge, I cannot, without high indignation, record, that a Lord of Parliament, one of the hereditary guardians of the Constitution, whose sacred duty, as Blackstone expresses it, is "to support the rights *both* of the crown and the *people*" has *betrayed* his trust, and, instead of supporting, has openly *resisted* one of the plain and indisputable rights of Englishmen.

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Yes!

* "The Meeting having been *improperly* called of the Inhabitants "at large," &c. *Words of the Protest.*

† "It may not be *improper* to add, that the account published (*i.e.* which "was signed C. G. Wade, Esq; Mayor) of the Transactions at the Meeting is *fallacious*, for by it, those who were not present might reasonably suppose, that the Resolutions were passed with the *General Concurrence* of the Meeting: the Fact is very *different*." *Words of the Protest.* Let Mr. Wade say whether it was quite *proper* in others to give him the lie direct? or whether it was quite *decent* in himself to belie his own statement, signed with his own name?

Yes! my Lord, I always thought that one of the clearest and most indisputable rights of the people of England was *that* of communicating their sentiments, on all subjects connected with their interests, to those who represent them in parliament: nor am I yet disposed to concede, to your bold denial, a most important privilege; without which, indeed, the whole system of Representation would be a poor and wretched mockery. My Lord, from your late attempts to impede the inhabitants of Warwick in the exercise of their constitutional rights, we see plainly, with what an *evil eye* you view even those small remains of British Freedom, which the most arbitrary measures of one of the most arbitrary administrations, that ever ruled in the country, has *yet* spared. But what must be the assurance, which, after this, could challenge the title "of a firm friend to the people's welfare" † and demand their confidence!

In pursuing the subject of your Lordship's vehement but ill sustained opposition to the sense of the Meeting, at Warwick; I am next to notice that *monstrous tale* about "the flourishing state of Trade and Commerce"—a tale, of which, it seemed, monstrous as it is, your Lordship thought so well, as that it deserved to be told and told again*. In vain do you labour, by this miserable rotten stay, to prop up a falling cause; and to make it believed that the *general* and *just* alarm gone forth, at the dreadful state of the Finances, at the increasing distresses and

† In one of his Lordship's handbills circulated in the Town.

* In order to shew that his statements were not the suggestions of the moment, but the result of long observation and deep reflection; his Lordship prefaced his account with saying, that it was the same he had given at the late County Meeting, when the resolution was carried by a decided majority, "To petition his Majesty for the dismissal of his present Ministers from his presence and counsels for ever." *After* that resolution had been passed, his Lordship, with other noble Lords, assembled a crowd of his and their tenants and other dependents; and *to them*, it seems, the wonderful discovery was made that "The whole nation was deceived; and that trade and commerce, instead of languishing, were never in a more flourishing state; for that the exports and imports had increased during the war, to a most incredible amount!" His Lordship, however, justly complained that very little attention was given to his fine drawn picture of the Public Prosperity: and he only forgot to mention, that he was *prudently checked* several times by some of his surrounding friends, while he was giving these accounts—which actually drew forth, even from the people of his own party, cries of indignation, instead of shouts of applause.

and diminishing resources of the Country, is nothing but the rage and noise of a "*few factious men*." Here, my Lord, I feel that I stand upon a rock of adamant. *Which* of us misconceives or mistakes the fact, let the people of Warwick, to whom the appeal is made, or the people of any city or town in the Kingdom—I care not what—judge between us. But certainly the Inhabitants of Birmingham, or Manchester, or those of Norwich, or Sheffield, or even those of the neighbouring city of Coventry, would be, in many respects, the most competent judges. Dare you, my Lord, join issue; and consent that the appeal should be made to *those*—who see and know and feel—what others perhaps, only hear of. Ask *them*—let *them* say—whether trade is every where alive and flourishing? whether the manufacturers are all in full employ? and orders received as fast as executed?

But your Lordship, I remember, in describing the flourishing state of the Country, laid the chief stress of your argument upon "the increased amount of the exports and imports during the war"—a subject of which your Lordship talked much, but, I suspect, understood little. Can you deny, my Lord, that this increase has arisen—not from the increase of our Foreign Trade in general—but principally from the cloathing and provisions of our fleets and armies—from the naval stores imported—and above all from the millions of gold coin and other supplies exported, for the use of our subsidized Allies on the Continent?† Yet who would have thought, from this bare and at best *equivocal* circumstance, of raising an argument—in contradiction to a thousand melancholy facts—that all is yet well with us—that still Prosperity smiles and Plenty laughs in the midst of our happy isle? What can such puerile prattle mean? Can you, my Lord, from this airy and fine spun speculation, undertake to disprove the deplorable and too notorious *facts*—that our trade is, in many of its best branches, almost *annihilated*—that our manufactures are every where *declining* fast—that the poor's rates are every where *increased* to an alarming amount and still *increasing*—that the *number* of those reduced to the last resource of parish relief, is daily *multiplied*—and that already the people of the middle and lower classes are nearly *crushed* by the enormous weight of public burdens—soon likely
to

* See Morgan's Add. Facts, page 45.

to be tenfold *greater*? In so awful and critical a situation of affairs, to talk of the national *prosperity*—to vapour about the increase of the *exports* and *imports*—what is it, my Lord, but to add *cruel mockery* to misery?—

The inhabitants of Warwick are at no loss to discover the *powerful reasons*, which move your Lordship to stand forth, on all occasions, the servile admirer and the furious advocate of that administration, which has so long enjoyed, and so long deceived, the confidence of the people. They know, my Lord, it is not for *nothing* that you roar and bluster; and pledge and promise support to the present system of Measures even to the last extremity of life and fortune. * They recollect to whom you are indebted for the honourable or profitable posts of Lord Lieutenant of the County, and Colonel of the Warwickshire Cavalry: and by whose favour your Brothers enjoy such snug and lucrative Offices. It is no wonder to them that you rant and rave so boisterously for the still further prosecution of a WAR, by which you are largely *profiting*; while your country lies bleeding at every pore. Nor would it much astonish them, if it should appear that, like other courtiers, never satisfied with their share of the public plunder, you are still grasping at *more*.—My Lord it is impossible not to perceive, that you have separated your interests from the interests of the country: and that, by multiplied obligations, and by open profession, you are leagued with that desperate confederacy—whose aim seems to be the *completion* of all that is still wanting of the ruin of Britain's freedom, happiness and glory. Go, then, my Lord—boast your services—claim gratitude—ask reward—of *those*, whose sinking cause you are struggling to support—But be not so absurd—so sottish—as to hope, at the same time, for the confidence of the *people*, whose interest you *betray*.

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* His Lordship repeated this idle gasconade with as much fervency and as much confidence of obtaining credit, as any of those who had gone before him—declaring “that he was determined to support this “most just and necessary war, to the last six-pence of his property, and “to the last drop of his blood.” But he carried his vow of eternal enmity to the French somewhat *farther* than others; when he exclaimed “that “even if the whole country were to desert him; he would stand up “alone, and with his single arm oppose his ferocious enemy, to his “latest breath”—and he might surely have added that “dying he “would bite the *dust* in rage that he could live and fight no *more*.”

I am fully aware, my Lord, that every attempt of mine would be equally absurd and vain to explain, to *your* comprehension the odious, unjust, and tyrannical principles of this monstrous English Requisition Bill; of which your Lordship professes (and I doubt not very sincerely) such high admiration. It is no wonder that *you*, on your *own* part, are so eager to testify your approbation of it. You have certainly two or three excellent *personal* and *private* reasons, for rendering it the homage of your applause—besides those declared in your Protest. But have you considered that, in this case, from one under your circumstances, such full and forward approbation looks a little *suspicious*; and may be thought to amount, in effect, to a pretty strong *condemnation* of the Bill? My Lord, it will not soon be forgotten with what anxious care you endeavoured to impress the people of Warwick with awe of the high antiquity and the unfaded glory of your Lordship's hereditary titles and honours: and it is the *charge* against this new Tax Bill, that it “scandalously favours” the privileged orders, in which you claim so distinguished a rank; while it *presses*, with all its tremendous weight, upon the people of the *middle* and *lower* classes. This you say is a *false* charge. But how do you *prove* it so? Can you pretend that *your own share* of the contribution to be demanded will be in *fair proportion* to your Lordship's large estates, and great stake in the country? My Lord, we must soon learn to get above the little feelings of delicacy in talking of the amount of another's income. I ask you, then—to say nothing of the trifling favour shewn you in the *exemption of six horses* from all taxation—I ask you—can you affirm that any thing *near* the *tenth* of your income will be demanded, by this Bill? Or will you deny that even a *fifth* of such ample revenues as yours, might not with more fairness be demanded than a *fiftieth* of an income of two or three hundred a year? Where, then, is the equality or the justice of all this? You were forcibly told, in the course of the debate, at the Court-House, that if the present is a War in support of the Privileged Orders; it is no more than fair and equitable, that the Privileged Orders should pay *at least* an equal share, towards the prosecution of it? It is, therefore, in every view, a just, valid, and most reasonable objection to the new plan of taxation, that it goes to *exempt* the people of the *higher orders*

from

from contributing their fair proportion to the necessities of the state. But of this objection, it is very possible that *your Lordship* may not feel all the force: Or if you feel, it would be too much to expect that you should *acknowledge* it. Yes! my Lord, I perceive we should have been miserably deceived, indeed, if we had expected to see in *you* an example of that “superior worth, superior rank demands”—that greatness and generosity of noble minds—that due regard for the common weal—and that enlightened preference of public justice to little private advantages—which would surely have pointed your Lordship’s Protest a contrary way, and directed it—*not* against the Resolutions of the People of Warwick—but against that novel, unjust, unconstitutional Bill—of which the grand leading principle is—“EXEMPTION to the Great and Rich, from their share of the public burdens; and severe and cruel OPPRESSION to the Lower and Middle Classes.”

My Lord, I have done with your Lordship’s proud and presumptuous opposition at the Court-House. I must now advert to scenes more contemptible and hateful, more degrading to your dignity as a Peer, and more disgraceful to your character as an Englishman, than even *those* which passed before the Public Meeting. My Lord, in the fair and open field of battle, you were beaten. The rising spirit of Independence, and the powerful sense of public and private Interest, combined, *contended* against all the weight, influence and splendour of Rank and Power; sustained, not, indeed, by commanding Dignity, but by assuming Arrogance; not by persuasive Eloquence, but fierce, threatening Rage. They contended *successfully*. They came off *victriously*. The Bill, notwithstanding the loud boast of intended modifications, still appeared to the Inhabitants of Warwick, a Bill unjust and tyrannical in its very *plan* and *principle*; and therefore incapable of any *possible* modifications, that could reconcile it with the principles of equality or equity. The question was loudly called for. The division took place. The presiding Magistrate instantly declared, that the Resolutions proposed were *passed* by a decided Majority. My Lord, there were three or four to one against you. The few who supported you, were some Gentlemen, whom, it is said, you had previously canvassed—and a few of the Clergy; over whom, it is known, your influence is omnipotent, You retired, defeated,

defeated, mortified, enraged. The shame of an opposition, at once disgraceful and unsuccessful, stimulated to exertion, and put invention on the rack. Something was to be thought of—and a plan was at last conceived—by which it was hoped that past errors would be repaired, and the victory yet recovered from those *faction* men, who had dared to think differently from your Lordship, on a question, in which *their* interests and *yours* were at open variance.

And what was this wonder-working project—that was either to change at once the deliberate, *declared* sentiments of a whole Town; or else, which was something easier, to cause the sense of a small minority to pass, to the world, for *that* of a large and triumphant majority? My Lord, having *privately* assembled a few persons, devoted to your interest; and held secret consultations with them; your dark machinations issued at last in the birth of a huge misshapen thing, called a Protest; full of bold assertion and confident denial; well stored with abuse; but miserably void of sense, coherence, argument, and even English.

This Protest, with infinite labour, amidst wretched poverty of Intellect, was now brought forth to the world: and the next great object was, either by fraud or force, either by persuasion or compulsion, to *procure signatures*—in order to give force to absurdity, and weight to inanity—in order to recover humbled pride from its mortification, and to assist ambition in its aspiring views. This part of the project, to any but the despotic chief of a Borough, would have been a formidable difficulty—but to him the idea was perfectly *familiar*, and the execution perfectly *easy*—not liable to be obstructed, by the sense of shame or the nice feelings of honour. He had nothing to do, but to signify his pleasure to those, who are too well *aware* of the consequences of disobedience. “Notices to quit” and “discharges from employment,” my Lord, are terrible things; and with them, you well know how to keep a dependent train of labourers, artizans, traders, and tenants, in awe. Armed with your high authority, your agents were presently dispersed abroad. They quickly ran from house to house, and from street to street; bearing on their lips the tremendous words “go—sign the Protest—such is his Lordship’s plea-

sure.*” Never was an election canvass in support of some *unpopular* candidate, of strange appearance and name unknown—but powerfully protected from the lofty turrets of the castle—carried on with more vigour, activity, and address; than was this new canvass for signatures to the Castle Protest! Some, by artful representations, were deluded. Others, by wicked threats, were terrified. Many and many a signature, in that long scroll, I have reason enough to know, were there placed with a trembling hand, an averted eye, and an aching heart. Attached to your Lordship’s protest, I read the names of many; who, I *saw*, actually divided with me, in favour of the Resolutions, they are now made to condemn—how this happened your Lordship can best explain. One person, I must mention, in particular; who was so early and so strongly convinced of the iniquitous *principle* of the New Tax Bill, that he was one of the *fourteen* who signed the Requisition, in which the summons of the Meeting originated. He was *present* at that Meeting: he *heard* the debate: he *gave* his voice in favour of the Resolutions: and yet within a few days after, appears the *name* of this *very person*—affixed to your Lordship’s protest—in which not only the Resolutions are condemned, but even *his own conduct* in supporting them is aspersed, as factious and wicked. Do you, my Lord, expect to find, that men are such *fools* and *dotards* as to believe that any one *could*, in this manner, belie his own sentiments and asperse his own conduct—without compulsion?—

My Lord, I shall have little to say of the Clergy and Gentry—from whose names, your Protest may be thought to derive so much of its weight and respectability. The former, whatever qualities good or bad they may possess, have certainly no claim to *independence*. They are, all of them, closely bound to your interests; either by gratitude for *past* favours, or by the hope of *future*. Long and faithful have been their services, rendered at every election, on every occasion; and if their abilities extend not far, they are never wanting in the *will*, to exert them

* That the public may conceive some idea of borough tyranny, the form of the decree issued out on this occasion is here added. “His Lordship *expects* that all his tenants should go and sign the Protest, at the Court-House; all who “do not must take the consequence!”

them to the utmost. Of fidelity to you, my Lord, I willingly give them the praise. But to the higher and nobler praise of pure independence of mind, and strict integrity of public conduct, I imagine they will not dare themselves to pretend.

Of the Gentry, my Lord, you have no doubt *heard*, that, previously to your Lordship's interference, they had most of them *declared* their utter abhorrence of the new Contribution-Bill. But, my Lord, I believe, they are not troubled with any nice scruples of propriety, or feelings of consistency: and I am sure they are apt to be dazzled, a little too much, with the splendour of your Lordship's rank and titles. I can only suppose therefore, that, delighted and fascinated with the honour of your Lordship's notice, they have been politely requested, and induced most complaisantly—to relinquish their *own* sentiments to *your's*.

Such, my Lord, it has appeared, is the *manner* in which the numerous signatures * were procured, and fastened to your Lordship's Protest. And yet, framed and signed as it was, under all these circumstances, unfavourable and even *fatal* to its credit, your Lordship feels no fear or shame to stand forth and hold up this Protest to the World, as expressing the *true sense* of the Borough of Warwick—in direct contradiction to the Resolutions of a General Meeting, which were fairly proposed, freely

* The following curious statement of the Signatures which append to my Lord's Protest has been printed, and circulated in the Town:—

	No.
" 1st. Lord† — — — — —	1
" 2d. Military Officers — — — — —	4
" 3d. Placemen — — — — —	10
" 4th. Clergymen — — — — —	9
" 5th. Parish Clerks, Sextons, and Gravediggers — — — — —	5
" 6th. Lord's Agents and their Clerks — — — — —	8
" 7th. Servants and Labourers — — — — —	14
" 8th. Tenants of Lord Warwick and the Corporation, the " greatest part of whom do not pay the additional Taxes	75
" 9th. Persons of various descriptions not liable to the new Tax	66
" 10th. Castle Tradesmen, not tenants, liable to the Tax	6
" 11th. INDEPENDENT SIGNATURES — — — — —	14
" Total — — — — —	212

"† Six Horses exempted from all Taxation."

freely discussed, and finally approved by a very large Majority*.

My Lord—I have no apology to make for the warmth of just and honest indignation—I am warranted by all that is fair, decent, and honourable between man and man, to *denounce* these proceedings, to the World, as base and abominable.—And I ask—can it be the cause of *truth* and *right* which requires such foul proceedings to sustain it?

My Lord, I have done. The production, which your Lordship's labours, and those of your fable tribe of counsellors, have brought forth, and named a PROTEST, is certainly one of the most curious and wonderful things, ever held up to the light of day. I had once intended to enter into a particular examination of it. But a nearer inspection terrifies me too much. To interpret into English a confused jargon of words—to marshal a rabble of incoherences into some connected order—to explore the meaning of what never yet, perhaps, reached the dignity of any intelligible sense—to reply to hollow declamation—to repel low abuse—to oppose regular confutation to bold but unfounded assertion—all this, my Lord, appears to me a task, so tedious and disagreeable, that I willingly release myself from it: and am content to leave your three-fold reasons for dissent, with all their subsidiary observations, to the undisturbed admiration of all who signed them—without compulsion—and to the wonder, contempt, and derision of the rest of the World.

I am,

My LORD,

YOUR LORDSHIP'S most obedient and
most humble Servant,

An Inhabitant of Warwick.

* It appears that the Members for the Borough of Warwick, by voting in favour of the new despotic Contribution Bill, have thought proper to follow the instructions of Lord Warwick's Protest, in direct opposition to those transmitted to them by Mr. Wade, in the name of the Burgesses and other Inhabitants of Warwick. Undoubtedly there is but *one plain* and *unavoidable* inference to be drawn from this conduct of those, who *call* themselves Representatives of a body of the Commons of England, and not of a Member of the House of Peers.

